

QUALITY OF LIFE: ABUSE AND NEGLECT

BQIS/Outreach Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual's health and safety and to improving their quality of life.

Objectives

To prevent Abuse and Neglect.

To understand the definitions of Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

To be knowledgeable of the different types of Abuse and Neglect as defined in the Indiana Administrative Code 460 and per policy of the Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services.

Definitions

Abuse: 1. Intentional or willful infliction of physical injury. 2. Unnecessary physical or chemical restraints or isolation. 3. Punishment with resulting physical harm or pain. 4. Sexual molestation, rape, sexual misconduct, sexual coercion, and sexual exploitation. 5. Verbal or demonstrative harm caused by oral or written language, or gestures with disparaging or derogatory implications. 6. Psychological, mental, or emotional harm caused by unreasonable confinement, intimidation, humiliation, harassment, threats of punishment, or deprivation.

Neglect: Failure to provide supervision, training, appropriate care, food, medical care, or medical supervision to an individual.

Exploitation: 1. Unauthorized use of the personal services, the property, or the identity of an individual. 2. Any other type of criminal exploitation, including exploitation under IC 35-46-1-1, for one's own profit or advantage or for the profit or advantage of another.

Facts

- Staff that have been thoroughly trained, and who understand and implement the Person Centered Plan as written, are less likely to commit abuse and/or neglectful acts.
- One of the best ways to increase an individual's "Quality of Life" and to decrease the risk of abuse and neglect is for the staff person providing assistance to offer opportunities to the individual to make choices throughout the day.
- Staff that are knowledgeable of and understanding of a person's disability are less likely to abuse and/or neglect others.

- Staff that are well trained in prevention of abuse and neglect are less likely to commit abuse and/or neglect and are more likely to understand, recognize, and report it properly and timely.
- People with little support are more apt to be abused and neglected. Agencies should make every effort to keep family members, advocates, guardians and any other representatives informed of the person's status, wants and needs and encourage visits. "Out of sight, out of mind" leaves a person more vulnerable to abuse and neglect.
- A person with disabilities who also presents very challenging behaviors is at a higher risk for being abused or neglected.
- The best way to prevent abuse and neglect is to understand what it is.
- Minor or major changes in a person's behavior may be a result of abuse and neglect acts; especially if that change involves an increase in withdrawal, avoidance behavior, avoidance of eye contact, a decrease in participation in valued activities, a reticence to be around certain people, or similar negative changes.
- Too much unstructured "leisure time" can be a factor that may increase the risk for abuse and/or neglect to occur. People who cannot easily fill their days with meaningful activity and who receive insufficient guidance and assistance with adding meaningful activity in their day, often engage in troubling behaviors which increases their risk for abuse. Staff who expect individuals to occupy their time themselves may be neglecting needed aspects of their care.
- Significant weight loss may be an indicator that abuse and/ or neglect may be occurring.
- Significant changes in a co-worker's or care giver's behavior may be a result of, or lead to committing abusive or neglectful acts.

Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. Know and implement the Person Centered Plans for persons with whom you work.
2. Offer opportunities to the individual to make choices throughout the day.
3. Implement the approved behavioral plan as written.
4. Ensure that all staff are knowledgeable of each person's disabilities.
5. Ensure that all staff are well trained in abuse and neglect prevention.
6. Encourage active participation of individuals' families, guardians and advocates.
7. Understand that persons with difficult behaviors will be more challenging with whom to work and will require more patience and understanding.
8. Recognize major and minor changes in a persons' behavior as a possible indicator of abuse/ neglect.
9. Promote meaningful, active, structured schedules.
10. Understand one's own successful strategies in dealing with stressful situations and use these as necessary when working with challenging situations (deep breaths, counting to 10, asking for assistance, etc).
11. Be observant for signs of a potentially abusive/neglectful care giver. This person may be demanding, loud, rude, or threatening. He or she may withhold personal belongings and belittle or intimidate a person through verbal statements, obscene or threatening gestures, or fearful facial expressions.

12. Inform supervisors immediately when observing anyone engaging in abusive/neglectful/exploitative behavior with an individual.
13. To help you prevent from becoming abusive, maintain your health by getting the necessary amount of sleep you need, maintain a healthy weight through exercise and eating a well balanced diet and build and or maintain a positive self esteem so you will be able to deal with stressful situations effectively and appropriately.
14. Recognize progress you have with persons you provide supports to and take the time to pat yourself on the back for the accomplishments to which you have contributed that make that person more independent.
15. Know who to report an observation of abuse and/or neglect to, and how to report it.

Learning Assessment

Questions that can be used to verify a person's competency in the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. True or False: Hitting, kicking and /or striking someone are examples of physical abuse.
2. True or False: Failure to take an individual to a medical appointment is an example of medical neglect.
3. True or False: The positive environment does not decrease the risk of abuse.
4. True or False: Leaving a person who requires 24/7 supervision in your car or in a van unattended may be an example of Neglect.
5. True or False: Exploitation means unauthorized use of personal services, the property, or the identity of an individual.
6. True or False: Rape, molestation, sexual misconduct, sexual coercion and sexual exploitation are all defined as sexual abuse.
7. True or False: If you are unsure that abuse and neglect occurred, do not report it.
8. True or False: Knowing yourself well, knowing when to take a break, and knowing or when to ask for help may be one of the best ways to prevent you from abusing or neglecting someone.
9. True or False: Staff that have been thoroughly trained and who understand and implement the ISP are less at risk for abusing or neglecting.
10. True or False: A person who has extremely challenging behaviors is less likely to be abused or neglected.

References

IAC 460 Rule

“Prevention of Abuse and Neglect” – Developed by North Dakota Center for People with Disabilities & the Midewin Institute in collaboration with the Indiana Statewide Education and Training Planning Group and the Indiana Institute on Disability & Community – Indiana University

Learning Assessment Answers

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. True
6. True
7. False
8. True
9. True
10. False

Outreach Services

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As a service for persons supporting individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, BQIS/ Outreach developed the Outreach Fact Sheet Library. The information provided is designed to enhance the understanding of the topic and does not replace other professional or medical instructions or individually developed plans. For more fact sheets and information, please visit DDRSOutreach.IN.gov.



Indiana Family & Social Services Administration
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